

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 927

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 5857

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH RAYMOND EDDE JULY 3

1. SUMMARY: IN A CONVERSATION LASTING ALMOST THREE HOURS, EDDE REVEALED HIMSELF AS A GREAT TALKER AND AN INDEPENDENT INTELLECT WHOSE REMARKS ARE SCATTERED WIDELY TO THE WINDS. AS IN CASE OF OTHER TOP LEADERS I HAVE TLKED TO SO FAR, EDDE EMPHAIZED THE PRIMORDIAL NEED FOR SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL BEFORE PEACE CAN BE ESTABLISHED UNDER ARAB LEAGUE AUSPICES OR OTHERWISE. HE EXPRESSED CONTINUING HOPES IN A SUEFUL USG ROLE IN LEBANON BUT EVIDENCED BELIEF THAT USG HAD THUS FAR COLLUDED WITH SYRIA AND ISRAEL RE LEBANON. HE THOUGHT THAT USG COULD DO MUCH INDIRECTLY THROUGH THE SYRIANS AND MIGHT, FOR EXAMPLE, FACILITATE A SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL--WHICH WOULD PRESERVE LEBANESE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY FROM SYRIAN AMBITIONS-- BY HELPINF FINANCE SYRIAN COSTS OF THEIR MILITARY ACTION IN LEBANON. USG SHOULD ALSO PRES FOR FRANGIE'S RESIGNATION. HE THOUGHT CURRENT SITUATION PLACES USG IN A GOOD POSITION TO COME

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TO GRIPS WITH RESOLUTION OF PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. US NOW

ENJOYS GOOD REALTIONS WITH BOTH SADAT AND ASSAD. HE WAS WITHERING INDESCRIBING THE VENALITY, FASLE AMBITIONS AND MALICIOUS STUPIDITY WHICH ALLEGEDLY PREVAIL AMONG TOP MARONITE LEADERS IN THE CHRISTIAN PART OF THE COUNTRY. HE BELIEVD CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL CAN SEE NO SOLUTION, NOW THAT THIER PEOPLE HAVE KILLED SO MANY MOSLEMS, OTHER THAN TO PUSH FOR PARTITION. WHILE EMPHASIZING SARKIS'S LACK OF POLITICAL FOLLOWING, EDDE CLAIMED TO BE PREPARED TO HELP THE MAN IF FRANGIE COULD SOMEHOW BE MADE TO RESIGN. HE SAID HE PERSONALLY WAS NOT RPT NOT BITTER AT NOT HAVING BEEN ELECTED PRESIDENT. HE PREDICTED AN ONGOING EFFORT BY CHAMOUN TO GET SARKIS'S RESIGNATION FIRST, AFTER WHICH CHAMOUN WOULD HOPE TO SUCCEED FRANGIE AS PRESIDENT. RE THE FUTURE, EDDE SAID THAT IF SYRIANS WITHDRAW AND PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON IS REGULATED, HE COULD FORESEE POSSIBILITY OF MOSLEMS AND CHRISTIANS LIVING TOGETHER AGAIN IN A UNITED LEBANON. LEBANESE MOSLEMS' NEWLY-DEVELOPED ANTIPATHY TOWARD SYRIA WOULD BE CONTRIBUTING FACTOR. BUT A "FINAL SOLUTION" MUST AWAIT SETTLE MENT OF PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. LEBANON WOULD NEVER BE SAME AGAIN AND IT MUST AVOID A RETURN TO "GANGSTERISM" OF THE RICH. END SUMMARY

2. ON JULY 3 I TOOK LAMBRAKIS WITH ME TO CALL ON EDDE IN HIS HOME OFF RUE HAMRA, WHER HE STILL IS RECUPERATING FROM LEG WOUNDS HE SUFFERED WHEN PHALANGISTS AOTACKED HIM IN HIS CAR LITTLE OVER A MONTH AGO. I EXPLAINED NATURE OF MY MISSION TO HIM. I SAID FACT PRESIDENT HAD MOVED SO QUICKLY TO SELECT SPECIAL EMISSARY TO LEBANON FOLLOWING TRAGIC DEATH AMBASSADOR MELOY REFLECTS IMPORTANCE USG ATTACHES TO LEBANON AND CONCERN WE HAVE FOR DETERIRATING SITUATION. I TOLD HIM WE OPPOSE PARTITION IN LEBANON AND DEBUNKED STORY OF A PLOT INVOLVING US WITH THE SYRIANS AND ISRAELIS. EDDE MADE NO BONES ABOUT CONTINUING TO BELIEVE IN THE PLOT, WICH HE ADMITTED HAVING PUBLICLY ALLEGED FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION OF THE MELOY MURDER, IN WHICH EDDE'S ROLE HAD BEEN TO PASS THE WORD OF THE KIDNAPPING FROM THE EMBASSY TO VARIOUS PALESTINIANS, WE GOT INTO LONG DISCUSSION, MUCH OF IT BACKGROUND BUT INGTERESTING NEVER-THELESS.

3. EDDE FIRST DISCUSSED THE PALESTINIANS. THERE ARE SOME 400,000 WHO HAVE, SOMEWHREE ELSE TO GO. NO ONE WANTS THEM. HE RECALLED A VISIT HE MADE TO SADAT SHORTLY AFTER SADAT TOOK POWER. CONFIDENTIAL

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SADAT TALKED TO HIM FOR OVER THREE HOURS IN THE COURSE OF WHICH HE SAID HE WAS GONG TO BUILD AN ARMY OF 700,000 TO FIGHT ISRAEL. WHEN SADAT ASKED WHAT LEBANON COULD DO TO HELP, EDDE OFFERED 50 - 100,000 PALESTINIANS LOCATED IN LEBANON, WHO WOULD BE HAPPY TO JOIN SADAT IN FIGHTING FOR THEIR HOMELAND. SADAT REFUSED THE OFFER, SAYING PAESTINIANS WERE MUCH TOO COMPLICATED AND WOULD GIVE HIM TROUBLE. SMILARLY, EDDE REMEMBERS THAE TIME IN 1973 WHEN HE AGREED TO VISIT DAMASCUS AND SEE ASSAD AFTER

ASSAD HAD CUT THE ROAD INTO LEBANON. KADDAM HAD MET HIM AT THE BORDER, FOLLOWING WHICH ASSAD HAD RECEIVED HIM ROYALLY, KEEPING HIM FOR FOUR AND A HALF HOURS. (EDDE JOKINGLY SAID HE WONDERED IF DICTATORS HAD THAT MUCH TO DO WITH THEIR TIME IN LIGHT OF THESE TWO EXPERIENCES. WE SUSPECT EDDE DID A GOOD DEAL OF TALKING HIMSELF.) ACCORDING TO EDDE, ASSAD SAID HE WANTED TO ASISE AN ARMY OF 3-400,000 MEN TO FIGHT ISRAEL, AND EDDE MADE THE SAME OFFER OF PALESTINIANS WHICH WAS SIMILARLY DECLINED BY ASSAD. ALL THIS IS UNFORTUNATE, EDDE TOLD US, SINCE SYRIA NEEDS WORKERS.

4. STILL RECOLLECTING THE PAST, EDDE REFERRED TO A CONVERSATION FRANGIE HAD WITH ARAFAT IN 1973 IN EDDE'S PRESENCE. THIS WAS AFTER HALF-HEARTED LEBANESE EFFORTS TO CRUSH THE PALESTINIANS HAD FAILED. EDDE SAID FRANGIE TOLD ARAFAT, "I WOULD HAVE LIQUIDATED YOU IF I COULD HAVE." ARAFAT IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN SURPRISED. FRANGIE IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE SAID, "YOU SHOULD PROTECT YOURSELF," AND WHEN ARAFAT ASKED HOW, FRANGIE MADE TE SUGGESTION THAT HE ARM HIMSELF. (COMMENT: I SUSPECT THIS STORY IS AT LEAST PARTLY APOCRYPHAL, BUT THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION THAT FRANGIE'S ATTITUDE AT THE TIME ACCURATLEY CONVEYED SUCH A MESSAGE.)

5. EDDE REVIEWED PALESTINIAN ARMAMENT AND THE WAY IN WHICH THEY BRANDISH SUCH ARMS, WHICH LEBANESE HAVE COME INCREASINGLY TO RESENT. EDDE NOTED IN PASSING HIS OWN ROLE IN VOTING AGAINST THE CAIRO ACCORDS AS BOTH A VIOLATION OF EEBANON'S ARMISTICE WITH ISRAEL AND AS A HARBINGER OF TOROUBLE BETWEEN LEBANON AND PALESTINIANS. IT WAS AT THAT TIME (1973) THAT TOP CHRISTIAN LEADERS DECIDED ON CREATION OF MILITIA TO MATCH THE PALESTINIANS. EDDE HIMSELF SAID HE WOULD NOT RAISE SUCH A MILITA AND WOULD REMAIN ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE MOSLESM, SO AS TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN INTERESTS JUST I CASE MOSLEMS WON. HE SAID
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ALTERNATIVE OF ENLARGING THE ARMY WAS NOT FEASIBLE SINCE PARLIA-
MENT WAS NOT ABOUT TOVOTE NECESSARY FUNDS, AND ARMY WOULD FALL
APART INTO CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM FACTIONS IF IT HAD TRIED TO FIGHT
PALESTINIANS. THERE HAD NEVER BEEN ANY QUESTION OF FGHTING THE
ISRAELIS.

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6. EDDE THEN WENT INTO A LONG DISCOURSE ON VARIOUS PLANS AND PLOTS IN THE PAST TO RECREAT DIVISIONS OF LEBANON AND SYRIA INTO CHRSTIAN, CRUZE, ALAWITE, SUNNIE, ETC., PARTS, WHICH HAD RECURRED IN RECENT HISTORY FROM CLEMENCAU ONWARDS. EACH HAD AN ISRAELI ANGLE INLTHE CONTINUED AMBITION OF ISRAEL FOR THE WATERS OF THE LITANI RIVER. UPSHOT OF THIS WAS THAT SYRIA, WHICH HAD NEVER RECOGNIZED LEBANON'S ANNEXATION AFTER WORLD WAR II OF THE BEKAA, AKKAR AND TRIPOLI AREAS,MAINTAINED ITS AMBITION TO TAKE THEM OVER. EDDE CONTENTED THAT IF THIS WERE NOT TRUE, ARMY WOULD NOT NOW BE OCCUPYING THE HERMEL TRIBAL AREA IN THE AKKARAN OR MOVING INTO BAALBEK IN THE BEKAA, NEITHER OF WHICH WAS THE SCENE OF GREAT FIGHTING. HE RECOGNIZED THE SYRIAN SERVICE IN OPENING THE BLOCKADE OF THE CHRISTIANS AT ZAHLE, BUT WONDERED WHY THE SYRIANS HAD ATTACKED SIDON. HE NOTED A GREAT DEAL OF PILLAGING BY SYRIANS AND PARTICULARLY THE SAIQA, INCLUDING DESTRUCTION BY THE SAIQA OF LEBANESE BANKS, THE PORT, ARTESIAN WELLS AND EVEN THE SIDON OIL REFINERY A FEW DAYS AGO. HE ALLEGED THAT ALL THIS WAS ON ASSAD'S PERSONAL ORDERS. HE DISAGREED WITH THOSE WHO CLAIM THAT LEBANON'S PROBLEMS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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AN INTERNAL MATTER ONLY. HE WENT INTO A LONG DISSERTATION ON THE WILES OF THE ALAWITE RELIGION, "WHICH HAPPENST TO BE MORE CHRISTIAN THAN MOSLEM", AND THE SUGGESTED DUPLICITY OF THE ALAWITES.

7. EDDE TALKED AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT THE PERSONAL VENALITY AND UNTOWARD AMBITIONS OF THE OTHER TOP MARONITE LEADERS, PARTICULARLY GEMAYEL AND CHAMOUN. HE DESCRIBED IN GREAT DETAIL A SERIES OF INCIDENTS IN HIS OWN PEACEFUL DISTRICT AROUND BYBLOS, WITH THE PHALANGE TERRORIZING LOCAL CITIZENRY. IN ONE CASE FIVE GREEK ORTHODOX HHTDC

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AND AN ATTACK ON EDDE HIMSELF WAS MOUNTED BY THE PHALANGE THE DAY HE WENT UP TO PRESENT HIS CONDOLENCES TO THEIR RELATIVES.

8. THIS LED EDDE TO THE ASSERTION THAT TOP CHRISTIANS SUCH AS CHAMOUN WANT PARTITION BECAUSE THEY HAVE KILLED TOO MANY MOSLEMS AND ARE AFRAID TO EVER TRY TO LIVE IN A STATE WHERE THEY HAVE TO MIX WITH THEM AGAIN. IT IS A PERSONAL, PHYSICAL THING. THESE MEN WILL NEVER KNOW WHEN SOMEONE MAY SHOOT AT THEM SEEKING REVENGE. CHAMOUN HAS ALSO SET FORTH A SERIES OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING CREATION OF CANTONS ALONG LINES OF DIVISIONS UNDER THE TURKS OR CONFEDERATION BETWEEN A CHRISTIAN AND A MOSLEM STATE.

9. A RELATED IMPERATIVE CONTINUED EDDE, IS THAT THESE TOP MARONITE LEADERS CANNOT EXPLAIN TO THEIR PEOPLE WHY THE WAR HAS BEEN FOUGHT. WHAT HAVE THEY GAINED? IS IT TELL ZAATAR? IS THAT WORTH FIGHTING 15 MONTHS FOR? DO THE CRISTIANS NOT REALIZE THAT, ALONG WITH PALESTINIANS, TELL ZAATAR CONTAINED MANY SHIITES, CHEAP LABOR WHICH FLED FROM THE SOUTH AND WHICH HELPED TO BUILD THE CHRISTIAN FACTORIES IN THE AREA AROUND THE TELL ZAATAR AREA? IN REPLY TO MY DIRECT QUESTION WHETHER, LEaving ASIDE QUESTION OF SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL AND ARRANGEMENTS OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH PALESTINIANS, HE COULD FORESEE MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN LEBANESE BEING PREPARED TO LIVE TOGETHER AGAIN, EDDE WAS NOT ALTOGETHER SURE. NEVERTHELESS, HE TENDED TO BE POSITIVE BECAUSE HE SAID NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME, SUNNI MOSLEMS FEAR AND HATE THE SYRIANS PROBABLY MORE THAN THE CHRISTIANS.

10. HIS RECURRING THEME WAS THAT THE SYRIANS MUST LEAVE FIRST
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BEFORE USEFUL DIALOGUE TO END THE FIGHTING COULD BE ACHIEVED. SHOULD PEACE RETURN, HE FORESAW CHRISTIAN MILITIAS KEEPING THEIR ARMS AS LONG AS PALESTINIANS DO. THIS LED HIM TO BELIEVE THAT THE FINAL SOLUTION TO THE LEBANESE PROBLEM HAD TO AWAIT SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN THE AREA. IN THE MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, A TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENT, WITH THE SYRIANS OUT OF THE COUNTRY, WOULD MORE LIKELY THAN NOT LEAD TO WARRING AMONG THE TOP CHRISTIAN FACTIONS, IN PARTICULAR THE SONS OF GEMAYEL AGAINST THE SONS OF CHAMOUN AND PERHAPS TONY FRANGIE'S PEOPLE. IN FACT, HE THOUGHT MOSLEMS WOULD FORGIVE CHRISTIANS FASTER THAN THE CHRISTIAN MARONITES WILL FORGIVE MOSLEMS FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

11. WHILE EMPHASIZING SARKIS'S LACK OF A POLITICA FOLLOWING, AS HAD SAEB SALAM, EDDE CLAIMED TO BE PREPARED TO HELP THE MAN IF FRANGIE COULD SOMEHOW BE MADE TO RESIGN. HE SAID HE PERSONALLY WAS NOT BITTER ABOUT NOT HAVING BEEN ELECTED PRESIDENT.

12. EDDE SAID HE WISHED TO MAKE A PREDICTION. CHAMOUN WILL MAKE GREATER AND GREATER EFFORTS TO GET SARKIS TO RESIGN THE PRESIDENCY. THESE MAY NOT BE SUCCESSFUL, BUT THAT IS THE DIRECTION IN WHICH CHAMOUN'S MIND RUNS. HE WOULD HOPE TO DSTITUITE HIMSELF FOR SARKIS AS PRESIDENT AS A CONDITION OF FRANGIE'S RESIGNATION. HE STATED THAT THE U.S., WITHOUT INVOLVING ITSELF DIRECTLY, MIGHT SOMEHOW HELP PREVENT ALL THIS BY PUSIHING FOR FRANGIE'S RESIGNAOION AND SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL. U.S. IS IN A BETTER POSITION THAN EVER BEFORE IN COMING TO GRIPS WITH OVERALL SOLUTION OF PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. U.S.HAS SADAT WITH IT AND MAY BE GETTING TO THE POINT WHERE IT HAS ASSAD'S COOPERATION TOO. AS LONG AS THE SYRIANS REMAIN, LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS WILL FIGHT THEM TOGETHER, EDDE EMPHASIZED. EDDE SAID HE HAD GREAT HOPES OF TOE U.S. HE FLET SECRETARY KISSINGER MUST KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE LEBANON AND HE DID NOT SEE WHY THE U.S., TO SAVE ISRAEL, WOULD WISH TO SEE LEBANON DESTROYED. HE THOUGHT THE USG COULD DE MUCH INDIRECTLY THROUGH THE SYRIANS AND PERHAPS FACILITIATING A SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL-- WHICH WOULD PRESERVE LEBANESE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY FROM SYRIAN AMBITIONS-- BY HELPING FINANCE SYRIANS COSTS THEIR MILITARY ACTION IN LEBANON.

13. LEBANON HAS GONE THROUGH A DIFFICULT PERIOD, EDDE SAID. THE "LEBANESE MIRACLE" HAS ENDED. BUT THEN THE FRENCH HAD HAD THEIR OCCUPATION UNDER THE GERMANS IN WORLD WAR II, THE U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

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HAD HAD ITS VIET-NAM, AND SUCH THINGS HAPPEN TO NATIOS. THE LEBANESE CAN PICK THEMSELVES UP AND FIND OUT WHO THEY ARE IN REBUILDING THEIR COUNTRY. HE WAS SURE THAT THE SYRIANS WOULD SOMEHOW PRESENT A BILL FOR THE COSTS OF THEIR ARMY'S ENTRY INTO LEBANON. PRIOR TO WITHDRAWAL, THEY WOULD DEMAND TERRITORY FOR COMPENSATION-.UNLESS THE USG WOULD PICK UP THESE COSTS IN ITS USUAL GENEROUS WAY. LEBANON CANNOT BE THE SAME AGAIN, AND IT MUST AVOID A RETURN TO THE "GANGSTERISM" OF THE RICH, WHO ARE FOR THE MOST PART IN PARIS ORE SOMEWHERE ELSE. AT THE SAME TIME, IT CANNOT BECOME A GHETTO INTO WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE PUSHED BY ALL THE ARAB STATES, AND WHERE RULE IS BY PHALANGE FASCISTS. A SEPARATE CHRISTIAN STATE IS NOT VIABLE ECONOMICALLY AND HE SAW NO REASON WHY USG WOULD GIVE IT ASSISTANCE. YET THESE CONTINUE TO BE THE DREAMS OF TOP CHRISTIAN LEADERS LIKE CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL.

14. EN PASSANT, EDDE SAID THE SOVIETS HAVE SENT A SPECIAL MISSION TO STUDY THE QUESTION OF WHY SOVIET TANKS "MELTED AWAY" WHEN THE SYRIANS USED THEM IN THE LEBANON. EDDE ASSUMED THE ANSWER LAY

IN FACT THAT SOVIETS NEVER ENVISAGED SITUATION SUCH AS THAT WHICH OCCURRED IN SIDON, WHEN TEN STUDENTS ARMED WITH RPG'S FIRED ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM A FEW YARD'S DISTANCE. ABU IYAD HAD TOLD EDDE THAT 72 SYRIAN TANKS HAD BEEN DESTROYED IN LEBANON.

15. COMMENT: EDDE REAMINS A MAVERICK. ALTHOUGH HE IS ONE OF THE OLD-LINE MARONITE TOP LEADERS, HE HAS A MUCH BROADER VIEW OF THE NEEDS OF OTHER COMMUNITIES AND A MORE HUMANITARIAN APPROACH TO LIFE. HE HAS CONSISTENTLY RETAINED GOOD RELATIONSHIPS BOTH WITH THE PALESTINIANS AND WITH THE SUNNI CONSERVATIVE MUSLIMS, AND AS SOMEONE WHO GREW UP WITH JUMBLATT, HE HAS A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM THAT APPEALS MORE TO JUMBLATT'S BASIC LEBANESE DRUZE MOSLEMS THAN TO JUMBLATT'S LEFTIST POSEURS. A CONSERVATIVE, WITH RULING TRADITIONS IN THE FAMILY, HE IS STILL ONE OF THE CLOSEST THINGS LEBANO HAS IN THE WAY OF A TRUE DEOOCRAT. HE IS NOT UP TO THE MENTAL AGILITY OF FOXES SUCH AS CHAMOUN AND JUMBLATT, BUT IS CONSIDERED MORE INTELLIGENT THAN GEMAYEL OR FRANGIE. EDDE IS A GREAT TALKER AND HE FINDS IT HARD TO STICK TO A TOPIC WITHOUT MAKING ANECDOTAL DIGRESSIONS. VERY MUCH A POLITICAL ANIMAL, HE IS A BACHELOR WITHOUT A CLOSE FAMILY AND REAMINS DEVOTED TO THE POLITICAL GAME EVEN THOUGH HE HAS HAD SO MANY NEAR MISSES IN THE PRESIDENTIAL SWEEPSTAKES. CONFIDENTIAL

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